

PHIL 3923H: Deception and Delusion
Prof. Funkhouser
Shorter Paper Assignment

Shorter Paper (200 points)

Write a short paper (approximately 5 to 7 pages) on the topic below. Make sure your paper is typed, double-spaced, written in proper English, stapled, with the pages numbered. Do not bother with a lengthy introduction or any other irrelevancies — stick to the assigned topic.

Paper Due Date: Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Topic: Consider the following (apparent) example of self-deception:

Nicole possesses much evidence that her husband Tony is having an affair with her friend Rachel. Nicole's other friends have reported to her that Tony's car is often seen parked in Rachel's driveway, at times when he claims to be with his male friends. Tony has lost sexual interest in Nicole, and other suspicious behavior provides sufficient evidence for Nicole to be more than skeptical. Yet she laughs off the concerns of her girlfriends, and thinks to herself that Tony is certainly a faithful husband. ("After all, I am still an intelligent, charming, and attractive woman — certainly more so than Rachel!") Yet, in the evenings when Tony claims to be with his male friends, Nicole avoids driving by Rachel's house — *even when it requires her to drive out of her way.*¹

I want you to take the intentional stance toward Nicole and, in particular, characterize her belief state with respect to Tony's fidelity. That is, provide an answer for this particular example to what Mele calls the *static puzzle* of self-deception. Defend your particular interpretation of Nicole. What additional evidence, if any, would either further support or disconfirm your interpretation? If you find it helpful, you may compare and contrast your analysis of this example with similar examples. Also, feel free to make use of material from Dennett or Mele in your discussion.

¹Funkhouser, Eric. 2005. "Do the Self-Deceived Get What They Want?", *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 86, p. 302.